DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 205 423 SO 013 486

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TITLE Economic and Political Theories of Organization: The Case of Human Rights INGOs.
PUB DATE Mar 81
NOTE 35p.: Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association (Philadelphia, PA, March 17-21, 1981).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Activism: Case Studies: *Civil Liberties: Conflict Resolution: *Economics: Group Dynamics: *International Organizations: Literature Reviews: *Organizational Theories: Political Attitudes: *Politics: Social Sciences
IDENTIFIERS Etzioni (Amitai): Olson (Mancur): Wilson (James Q)

ABSTRACT

This paper reviews research on international nongovernments' organizations dealing with human rights (INGOs), and interprets this research in light of the overlap of the fields of organizational theory (including group theory) and human rights. The purpose is to contribute toward a useful exchange between social scientists who seek to explain organizational behavior and scholars who seek to understand, explain, and/or improve international nongovernmental human rights activity. The discussion focuses on five major topics: (1) an overview of the nature and activities of five INGOs (Amnesty International, International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, International League for Human Rights, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and the World Peace Council) and an introduction to various theories of organization: (2) consideration of group theory, with emphasis on the work of David Truman: (3) analysis of political approaches to organization, based particularly on research by James Q. Wilson and Amitai Etzioni: (4) analysis of economic approaches to organization, based on the works of Mancur Olson: and (5) a suggested agenda for further application of organizational theories to human rights activity. Some attention is focused also on an additional theme--the commensurability of different national and cultural efforts for promotion of human rights. Based on the above review and interpretation, the author concludes that, although the relationships among group theory, political, and economic theories appear to offer a basis for creation of a more comprehensive social theory, these disparate approaches have yet to be integrated into a coherent framework applicable to organizations in a variety of societies. The implication is that research applying major propositions of these and other theories to a specific human rights INGO would be useful to theorists and practitioners alike. (DB)

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# ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL THEORIES OF ORGANIZATION: THE CASE OF HUMAN RIGHTS INGOS

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SO 013 486

Draft prepared for delivery at the International Studies Association Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, March 17-21, 1981

Introduction. The purposes of this paper are those of review, interpretation, and provocation: The review will focus on the major literature which deals with groups, with provision of collective goods, and human rights. Interpretation will address the overlap of the fields of organizational theory (including group theory) and human rights -- does each provide useful insight for students of the other? The provocation will consider means by which there can be a useful exchange between the social scientists who seek to explain organizational behavior and the scholars who want to understand, explain, and/or improve international nongovernmental human rights activity.

The following discussion will cover five topics: 1) delineation of the subject matter of this essay: human rights international nongovernmental organizations (hereafter INGOs*), and theories of organization 2) group theory, with David Truman as an exemplar; 3) "political" approaches to organization, with James Q. Wilson and Amitai Etzioni as exemplars; 4) "economic" approaches to organization, with Mancur Olson as exemplar; and 5) a suggested agenda for further application of organizational theories to human rights activity. An additional theme which will be probed is the commensurability of different national and cultural efforts for promotion of human rights.

It is acknowledged that the findings of organizational theorists have been summarized elsewhere (See e.g. Moe, 1980; Berry, 1977). The original contribution of the present analysis is its extension of organizational theories to groups which are: a) transnational; and b) concerned with human rights.

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* INGOs will refer to nongovernmental groups with activities in at least three countries; NGOs will describe nongovernmental groups active in less than three countries.

1. Domain of the Analysis. This section delineates the topics discussed: human rights INGOs, group theories, political theories, and economic theories. Scholarly works in each area are identified.

Human Rights received much scholarly attention during the 1970s. The focus here is on human rights INGOs, groups which meet the following criteria, which are among those set forth by the Union of International Associations (1978):

> The aims must be genuinely international in character, with the intention to cover operations in at least three countries...: There must be individual or collective participation, with full voting rights, from at least three countries. Membership must be open...; The Constitution must provide for a formal structure giving members the right periodically to elect a governing body and officers. There must be a permanent headquarters and provision made for continuity of operation...; Substantial contributions to the budget must come from at least three countries... (unpaged)

Most of the discussion of human rights INGOs will focus on examples. Some major INGOs which represent the diversity of transnational human rights activity are described in Table 1.

In relating these human rights INGOs to theories of organization it will be useful to consider whether their mandates are broad (as with the International League for Human Rights, which professes to deal with all rights included in the United Nations Universal Declaration, from free religion, to food, to holidays with pay) or narrow (as with Amnesty International, which focuses on prisoners of conscience, torture, and capital punishment); whether the organizations seek mass participation (as Amnesty does, through adoption groups) or are run by elites (as with the ILHR); whether the INGOs focus on the rights of all people (as does the World Peace Council) or are designed to advance the rights of its members (as in the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions; and the homogeneity or heterogeneity of cultural and national groups in the INGOs' memberships.

Many INGOs have interest in such organizational theorists' questions as:

Table 1

Selected Human Rights INGOs

| Organization | Date Founded | Characteristics |
|---|---|---|
| Amnesty International (AI) | 1961 | Includes mass participation through adoption groups; Defends "prisoners of conscience"; opposes torture and death penalty. Chapters worldwide, but strongest in U.S. and Western Europe; nonpartisan. |
| International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) | 1949 | Composed of national unions; primarily concerned with trade union rights. Generally pro-West with affiliates in many African and Latin American countries. |
| International League for Human Rights (ILHR) | 1942 | A league of loosely affiliated national and subnational human rights groups. Proclaims support for entire Universal Declaration. Most individual support is from U.S. and West Europe, but has affiliates worldwide. |
| Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) | 1915 | Includes national sections, groups, and individuals in 24 countries, primarily Western; works for "constructive peace" which includes human rights activities, sometimes in cooperation with socialist Women's International Democratic Federation. |
| World Peace Council (WPC) | 1950 | Includes individuals and representatives from over 100 countries; sympathetic to Soviet and East European governmental human rights perspectives; opposes racism and colonialism. |

a. What incentives induce people to join groups?

b. What strategies whould group leaders pursue to advance their groups' size and success, and to guarantee the groups' persistence?

c. What circumstances lead to the creation of human rights groups?

d. Under what circumstances, and with what consequences will cooperation between groups take place?

Thus far such questions have received little attention in the human rights literature. While there are many revealing examinations of specific organizations (see e.g. Levenstein, 1965 on Freedom House; Scoble and Wiseberg, 1976 and Larsen, 1979 on Amnesty International; Wiseberg and Scoble, 1977 on the International League of Human Rights; and Berry, 1977 on the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom) and comparative treatments of a variety of organizations (see e.g. Weissbrodt, 1977; Ray and Taylor, 1977) the discussion sheds little light on the problems and potential of human rights organizations as organizations.

One might argue that this is for good reason: the human rights INGO world is a complex one, in which attempts to compare WILPF, the ILHR, Amnesty International, and the World Peace Council are doomed to resemble the theory of holes criticized by MacIntyre (1971).

Organizations. The theories reviewed here will not persuade the skeptics, and may only produce slight changes in the ledgers of the open-minded. The power derived from the simplicity of some theorists' arguments will not extend to each and every type of organization. Some authors make exception for altruistic groups, which might warrant labelling human rights INGOs deviant cases.

The first group of theorists discussed are group theorists, with Truman, 1951 as an exemplar. Garson, 1978 provides a useful review and critique of group theorists, who suggest that groups are fundamental actors in politics. Rather than examining governmental structures, therefore, political analysts should focus on group interests which struggle to influence the governmental process.

While group theory is a theory of politics, political theories, as used in this paper, examine politics in groups rather than groups in politics. Wilson, (1973) is considered an exemplar of this group, based on his argument that:

> the behavior of persons occupying organizational roles.... is principally, though not uniquely determined by the requirements of organizational maintenance and enhancement and that this maintenance, in turn, chiefly involves supplying tangible and intangible incentives to individuals in order that they will become, or remain, members and will perform certain tasks (13).

Wilson suggests a variety of incentives which may or may not coincide with members' self-interest, and applies his thesis to political parties, labor unions, business associations, and civil rights associations. His framework has been applied and extended in such studies as Berry (1977) which deals with public interest groups. Considerable attention will also be devoted to a "political" typology of organizations, developed by sociologist Amitai Etzioni (1961).

Economic theories also suggest that those who join organizations do so not necessarily because they are members of a social group, but instead because they desire specific incentives. "Economic" theorists specify that rational involvement results from exchanges in which benefits to the individual exceed the value of time and money invested.

Key is Mancur Olson's Logic of Collective Action (1971) which led to a wide range of spinoffs claiming greater relevance to politics, chief among them Frohlich, Oppenheimer, and Young (1971), Salisbury (1969), and Moe (1980). The relevance of altruism (rational consideration of the interests of the others) is given consideration in Frohlich (1974), Taylor (1976), and Barry (1980).

Some previous works might be considered organizational analyses of transnational human rights activity. Lipset, Trow, and Coleman (1956) conducted an extensive investigation of politics in the International Typographical Union (New York Chapter). Lipset et. al. focused extensively on democracy within the

Union and sought to explain the ITU's deviance from iron laws of oligarchy suggested by Michels and other elitists.

Berry uses insights from Salisbury, Wilson, and others for his extensive analysis of U.S. public interest groups. Included in his analysis is a chapter on the U.S. section of a human rights INGO, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). Within Berry's generally solid analysis, one can detect the sharp divergence between the summaries of organizational theories (early chapters), and the anecdotal accounts of WILPF and other NGO practices.

Lissner (1977) is an explication of the political nature of voluntary development activities undertaken by INGOs such as OXFAM and the Lutheran World Federation. These groups have extensive, though not always primary, human rights concerns. In a short section Lissner focuses on the work of Anthony Downs, and argues that it offers useful explanations.

Surprisingly, concern has focused only briefly on how organizational theories enhance our understanding of specific NGOs and INGOs. Where this has occurred examples have been disproportionately American (even if U.S. chapters of INGOs).

2. Group Theory. Table 2 offers a comparison between group theories, political theories, and economic theories. Of the three types, group theories have the noblest ambitions. David Truman's The Governmental Process suggests greater attention to diverse interests of potential and existing groups as a basis for understanding politics. While Truman focuses primarily on groups in the United States, he and others have claimed applicability of group theories to Western European countries, and presumably to the entire world. (See the discussion in Macridis, 1961: 25-26.)

Two aspects of Truman's group theory may offer insights to those who would understand, explain, or improve INGO human rights activity: its conception of group origins, and its prescription for groups as a basis of stability (and

Table 2

Theories of Organization

| Type of Theory | Exemplar(s) | Scope | Primary Incentives | Characteristics |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Group Theory | Truman, 1951 | Groups represent shared interests and are key actors in politics | Purposive | Society consists of manifest or latent competing interests; latent interests will be activated when infringed upon greatly; groups overlap, precluding dominance, promoting stability. |
| 2. Political Theories | Wilson, 1973 | Voluntary, membership organizations, including political parties | Purposive<br>Solidary<br>Material | Some organizations represent members' attitudes; in others, material gain is valued foremost; in others community is the primary value. |
| | Etzioni, 1961 | All governmental & nongovernmental organizations, including involuntary ones, e.g. prisons | "<br>(both + and -) | Above, plus use of coercion considered |
| 3. Economic Theories | Olson, 1971 | All collective action, governmental or nongovernmental | Material | Individuals usually make rational choices in joining associations. They generally advance self-interest, which means that organizations providing collective goods (national defense, human rights) are difficult to maintain without coercion. |

guarantee of adherence to human rights standards). Vital to both aspects is Truman's pluralist view of politics as competition between multiple, overlapping groups to represent the interests of potential members.

Concern with origins of interest group activity may aid in understanding when and where INGO attempts to add or create new chapters would be propitious. To the extent that groups with similar origins may be likely candidates for coalition-building (a question which merits investigation), classification of NGOs and INGOs by origin may isolate clusters with similar purposes and conceptions of human rights promotion.

Salisbury offers a concise summary of two conceptions of group origins set forth in Truman's third chapter: the proliferation hypothesis and the homeostatic mechanism hypothesis (1969: 3,5; Key pages in Truman are 42-52). The former hypothesis suggests:

> P1: Formation of organization is a consequence of social differentiation, new technology, and better communication.
>
> P1 (corollary): Societies with greater social diffentiation, newer technology, and better communication will have more interest groups, and larger interest groups, ceteris paribus.

One might note that many of the activities conducted by human rights INGOs, e.g. monitoring of sensitive political trials, orchestrated global letter-writing campaigns, and instant mobilization of an array of diverse publics for lobbying, have been facilitated greatly by advances in communications.

There does appear to be increasing concern with human rights over time, and greater INGO involvement in those societies with the most differentiated social structures, thus lending prima facie support to the proliferation hypothesis. While one of today's INGO human rights leaders, the Anti-Slavery Society, traces its origins back to the early Nineteenth Century, systematic

examination of the Yearbook of International Organizations reveals recent formation of a plethora of groups.*

The homeostatic mechanism hypothesis is based on Truman's observation that:

> When a single association is formed, it serves to stabilize the relations among the participants in the institutionalized groups involved. At the same time, however, in the performance of its functions it may cause disturbances in the equilibriums of other groups or accentuate cleavages among them. These are likely to evoke associations in turn to correct the secondary distrubances. The formation of associations, therefore, tends to occur in waves. (1951:15)

This suggests:

P2: Proliferation of organizations occurs in distinct stages.

Here the formation of new organizations breeds counter-organization, and thence a stalemate. This can easily be reconciled with the proliferation hypothesis, with new differentiation creating new causes for concern, e.g. use of computerized data banks, leading to formation of human rights groups concerned with privacy, then of business groups desiring a minimum of regulation on data-gathering, then an eventual limit to the number of useful organizations on both sides. Rather than suggesting the image of a direct upward thrust (suggested by the proliferation hypothesis), the image here would be of an ascending spiral.

The wave image appears to bear some resemblance to actual patterns of organization formation. One can identify many human rights organizations which originated or expanded during or following such crises as World War I (e.g. the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom), World War II (e.g. the International League for Human Rights) or the Chilean bloodbath (the

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* New communications also lead to greater awareness of old groups. In this regard, the formation of the Human Rights Internet as a clearinghouse is important.

numerous solidarity committees established in Western Europe and, to a lesser extent in the United States. Whether the Truman explanation is internally consistent, policy-relevant to human rights INGOs, or capable of providing a basis for prediction will be assessed later.

Truman's prescription of a role for interest groups in ensuring stability assumes that common interests exist and will be acted upon, and that the emergence of latent groups is not structurally constrained. Truman's analysis concludes with the suggestion that:

> Whether [the group process] eventuates in disaster will depend in the future as in the past basically upon the effects of overlapping membership, particularly the vitality of membership in those potential groups based upon interests held widely throughout the society. These memberships are the means both of stability and of peaceful change (1951:535)

This suggests:

> P3: Creation of organizations representing previously latent groups leads to social order and peaceful change.

What, then, would be the role for human rights INGOs? Truman could certainly be invoked in debunking pretensions to defense of universal human rights. (See his remarks on the "public interest," e.g. "In developing a group interpretation of politics...we do not need to account for a totally inclusive interest, because one does not exist." 1951:51. In this regard see also Schumpeter's dissection of democracy as pursuit of a "common interest." 1950:250-252)

Truman's basis for a desired society, stable and peaceful change, would be helped, though, wherever potential groups could be activated. Human rights INGOs such as the Minority Rights Group and Servicio Paz y Justicia do aim to empower those whose interests have heretofore not been represented, and would appear consistent with (and perhaps vindication of) Truman's prescription. Amnesty International, the rights group with perhaps the greatest

pretension to defense of a common interest, also serves as a means whereby activist lawyers, laborers, women, and other interests can aid their latent counterparts in other societies.

Truman's explanation of group origins and his pluralist prescription have been summarized. How do they fare in the global arena? Human rights INGO activity was long dominated by Western European and American organizations; beginning in the 1960s the Soviets and East Europeans orchestrated the creation of counterparts, the World Peace Council among them. There is some African, Asian, and Latin American representation in INGOs, but these countries' nationals are seldom represented proportionally in the leadership. (On the distinct worlds of transnational human rights participation, see Blaser, 1979. On disproportionately low representation of Asian, Latin American, and African members in INGOs generally, see Alger and Hoovler, 1974.)

Patterns of INGO and NGO development suggest that: a) consistent with the proliferation hypothesis, development facilitates (though it is far from a single cause) the creation of common-interest associations (See Kerri's detailed review of anthropological literature, 1976; Kerr's discussion of African associations which "banded together for self-protection and mutual-advantage in the potentially hostile, modern urban environment." 1978:93; and the many studies of the link between emergence of voluntary associations and nationalist sentiment summarized in Smith and Freedman, 1972: 97-99.); b) much of the current proliferation reflects an emphasis on individual or group needs and solidarity, more suitable to organizations advancing exclusive interests; c) future proliferation may, however, include greater attention to universal interests; d) political culture has a major effect on how or where groups proliferate -- thus two societies at the same level of development will not necessarily have the same number of associations (See especially

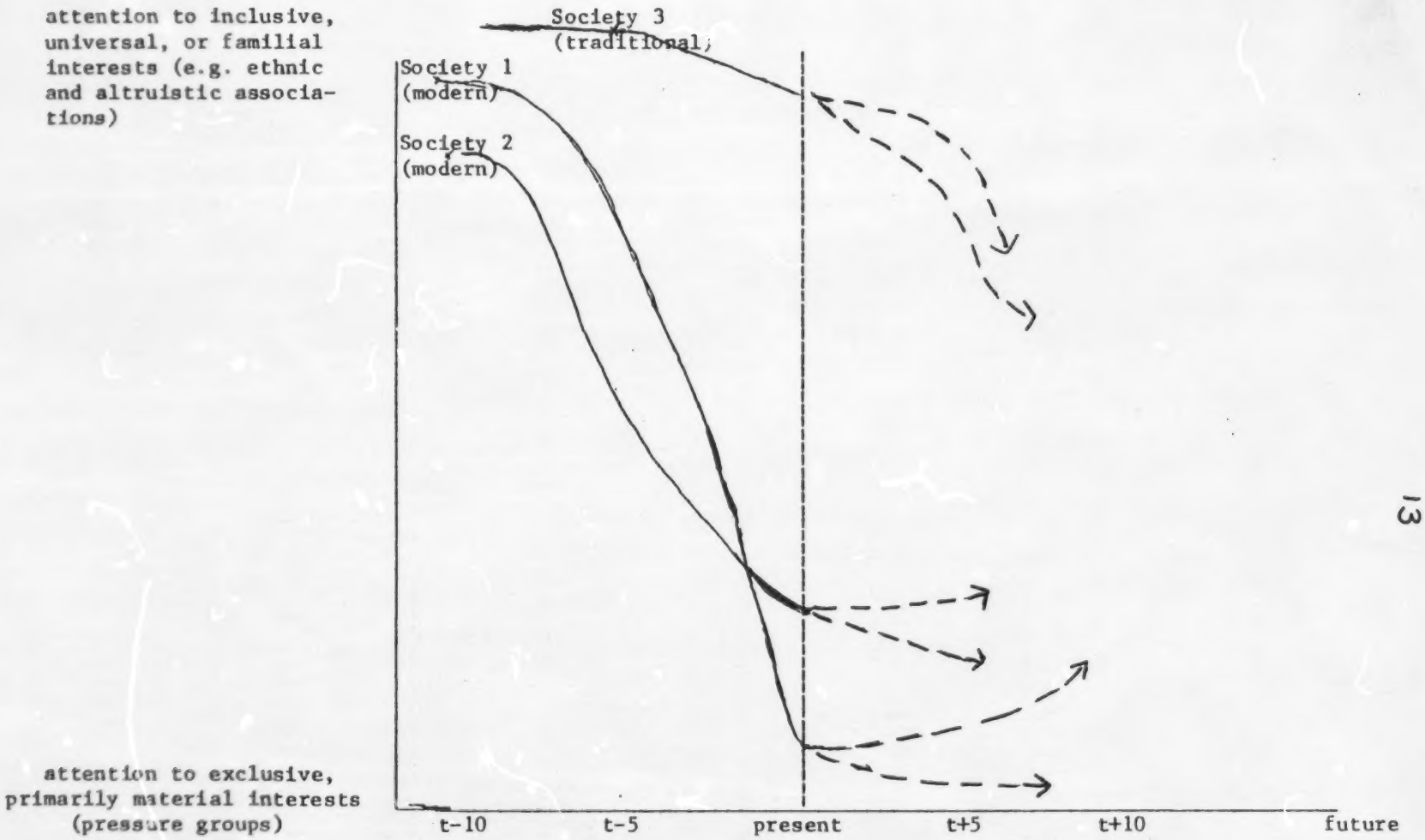
Macridis, 1961: observations b, c, and d are illustrated in Figure 1); e) there are imbalances in patterns of NGO and INGO representation: while virtually each group in society is now represented by one or several organizations, it does not follow that Truman's hoped-for stability and peaceful change are in sight.

3. Political Theories. Group theorists argue that interest groups evolve from shared purposes, or interests in society. James Q. Wilson and Amitai Etzioni have developed frameworks which account for a wider range of motivations, and suggest that there is not necessarily a one-to-one correspondence between shared interests (e.g. all those interested in freedom of expression) and organizations representing those interests (e.g. Amnesty International).

The frameworks are summarized in Table 3. Etzioni claims applicability to all forms of organizations, governmental and nongovernmental. He suggests three kinds of power available to leaders, which may be compatible or incompatible with the three kinds of member involvement. (1961:12-14).

Human rights INGOs would be candidates for what Etzioni labels "typical normative organizations," i.e. they often have leaders whose power rests on persuasion and manipulation of symbolic rewards (rather than on remuneration or coercion), and followers whose involvement is of high intensity (rather than alienative or calculative). Etzioni's treatment suggests the following propositions:

> P4: Organizational effectiveness is a function of the congruence of power applied by the organization and involvement of lower participants (1961:14)
>
> P5: In normative organizations, lower participants are more likely to be highly integrated in organization activities, and to accept elite control over organization activities. (Etzioni, 1951:112)




NOTE: Because of different traditions, ideologies, or laws, Societies 1 and 2 may differ in terms of the kinds of organizations which exist, though they have similar levels of technology.

Figure 1

Hypothetical Patterns of Organization Development

Table 3

Political Theories of Organization

| Wilson's Incentive Type/ Etzioni's Compliance Structure Component | Definition | Implications |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Material (Wilson, 1973:33, 36-39) | Tangible Rewards: money or things and services readily priced in monetary terms (e.g. wages) | Business associations, political machines rely on these; little attention paid to substantive goals, stated purposes |
| 2. Specific Solidary (Wilson, 33-4; 39-45) | Intangible, arising out of the act of associating; Can be withheld from others. Value comes from exclusion (e.g. offices) | Often as bitter a source of conflict as material incentives; by nature impossible to provide all members with special status. |
| 3. Collective Solidary (Wilson, 34; 39-45) | Created by associating; Intangible and inclusive; Include Fun, conviviality of being together | Vital to avoid "political" conflict in such associations, though support of humanitarian cause may increase solidary incentives. |
| 4. Purposive (Wilson, 34; 45-51) | Intangible; derive from sense of satisfaction of having contributed to the attainment of a worthwhile cause | Often become single-person efforts; Generally found in combination with solidary incentives; where purposive are prime, there will be a willingness to antagonize. |
| 5. Coercive Power (Etzioni, 1961:5, 27-31) | Rests on physical sanctions or threats | Works best where organization members' involvment is alienative, intensely negative. |
| 6. Remunerative Power (Etzioni, 5, 31-39) | E.g. salaries, wages Based on control over material resources and rewards. | Works best where organization members' involvement is calculative, leading to utilitarian compliance. |
| 7. Normative Power (Etzioni, 1961:5, 40-54) | Rests on allocation, manipulation of symbolic rewards & deprivations through employment of leaders, manipulation of mass media, allocation of esteem and prestige symbols...ritual. | Works best where members' involvement is moral, intense, leading to normative compliance. Vital in voluntary associations. |

For these propositions to be useful, organizational leaders would have to have some latitude over whose involvement is sought, and over the means by which power is applied. There may be incongruence within the world of human rights NGO activity: This exists where, for instance, leaders rely on remunerative power to pay off members who were present for moral reasons. One might also find calculative members (with paid positions, and hoping for higher posts ) while leaders expect normative power to suffice.

Analysis of INGOs suggests a possible extension of Etzioni. INGOs exert power over their affiliates, and presumably affiliates have particular kinds of involvement within the INGO. (Affiliation may be very loose, as in the International League of Human Rights, where autonomous NGOs share common purposes; it may be more restrictive, as in Amnesty International.) One might hope that affiliates would share moral involvement, thus enjoying congruence with an INGO exercising normative power. In actual practice, independent NGOs may fall in or out of favor with various IGOs over a period of time. This is because their involvment is in fact calculative - understandably linked to the question of which INGOs offer greater services. Wilson suggests that "Individuals will often contribute to large organizations without receiving any specific, material benefit from it; organizations rarely will" (1973:277). Thus,

> P6: Utilitarian compliance and material incentives have greater applicability to coalitions of organizations (INGOs) than to single, affiliated organizations (including NGOs)

Wilson draws attention to three kinds of incentives, as described in Table 3: material incentives, purposive incentives, and solidary incentives. While one might argue that existence of all three types result from characteristics inherent in human nature, it is evident that incentives vary greatly across societies and over time.

Wilson's distinction between solidary and purposive associations suggests that it is in the former conflict results from matters of "status, especially the distribution of recognition and the admission of new members" (1973:45). However, patterns of conflict and harmony within purposive organizations, including human rights INGOs, suggest that provision of solidary incentives is also vital to their success. While group theorists would suggest that human rights issues brought members of human rights INGOs together, studies of a wide range of organizations indicate that most members are introduced to group activities by friends. (One would make exception, of course, for such groups as Hare Krishna, which make a practice of recruiting the isolated. Snow, Zurcher, and Ekland-Olson, 1980). Members may attend in part because they share the group's objectives, but they may also see group meetings (or identity with the group if it does not have meetings) as useful for meeting people.

The tendency of single-minded attention to group tasks to alienate members suggests:

> P7: Provision of general solidary incentives is important to the success of any voluntary organization.

Solidary incentives might even overcome material drawbacks to coalition-formation. Religious groups, trade unions, and others are likely to affiliate with Amnesty International for such solidary incentives as the status of being linked to a Nobel Prize winner. Good or bad relations between organization personnel may also play a role. This is not to deny the risk of too much attention to solidary incentives--where group tasks are neglected in reinforcing the aura of good feeling.

Brief note should be made of cross-national INGO links. There are societies in which the solidary incentive to link with Amnesty and other Western rights groups would be negative--evidence of a link with foreigners. Here the only hope for public willingness to participate in a transnational

human rights coalition would be the chance that purposive incentives would outweigh solidary and material disincentives. (This helps to explain why Amnesty has much greater involvement in Scandanavia, Britain, and the United States than elsewhere.)

4. Economic Theories. Group theorists focus on an identity of group purpose and members' interests; political theorists include a variety of incentives. The strength of economic theorists' efforts is their attention to incentives, generally material, which will be exchanged for members' time. Thus individuals rationally calculate the decision to join; organizations are formed by entrepreneurs who provide services to the group (e.g. human rights lobbying), and charge members the amount of expense incurred plus a profit.

Classified here as "economic theories" are those of Mancur Olson and the many others who have built upon his work. Some major contributions in building and revising economic theories of organization are summarized in Table 4. Of interest for understanding human rights INGO activity are such topics as : the collective goods/private goods distinction; the "free-rider" problem in group activity to gain collective goods, and resulting "suboptimal" provision of the goods; the role of nonmaterial incentives; and the role of entrepreneurs.

Collective goods or public goods which include national defense, clean air, clean water, and human rights differ from private goods, including automobiles, air conditioners, beans, and guns. "Those who do not purchase or pay for any of the public or collective good cannot be excluded or kept from sharing in the consumption of the good, as they can where noncollective goods are concerned." Olson, 1971:15.

Abrams briefly considers Soviet dissenters' activities as providing a collective good (human rights pressure) for which they bear full and heavy costs (1980: 289-291). One can take a variety of tacks in analyzing why a

Table 4

Economic Theories of Organization: Relevant Literature

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Olson, 1971 (originally 1965) | Taken as the starting point by succeeding economic theorists. Olson suggests that rational individuals will not contribute to provision of collective goods (such as human rights promotion) unless they are coerced, or offered selective incentives. Since rational individuals are unlikely to contribute to provision of collective goods through voluntary organizations, supplies of these goods will be suboptimal. |
| 2. | Salisbury, 1969 | Argues that Olson does not explain why entrepreneurs start organizations. Salisbury suggests that they (entrepreneurs) seek political "profit", following a discussion of material, solidary, and expressive (cf. Wilson's purposive) incentives. |
| 3. | Frohlich, Oppenheimer, and Young, 1971 | Discusses provision of collective goods. An analysis of political competition designed to explain why leadership arises. |
| 4. | Taylor, 1976 | Takes issue with Olson's assumptions about human nature. Uses game theory to discuss virtue and utility of altruistic strategies. Taylor argues that humans will contribute to provision of collective goods (such as human rights) without being coerced. |
| 5. | Barry, 1978 (originally 1970) | A review of economic and sociological theories of democracy, including Olson. Barry takes a favorable view of economic approaches (Olson and Downs), but suggests that they do not account for "sense of duty," the likely cause of contributions to OXFAM (and human rights INGOs). |
| 5. | Moe, 1980 | Finds a mixture of economic and purposive motivation in U.S. interest groups. Includes data based on a survey of printers, farmers, and others. |

few individuals would bear great costs to provide their society with apparently collective goods:

a) It may be that this is a deviant case. Dissidents are a privileged group who are able and willing to bear the full costs of providing the good;

b) Do they in fact provide goods at all? Gallup polls suggest that a sizable majority of Uruguayans thought that they had too many human rights (Survey Research Consultants, 1980:283). There are also some analysts who appear to believe that human rights activity begets more dangerous repression (See e.g. Lefever, 1978). One might draw on the abundant psychological studies purporting to show that activists are maladjusted. (If so, the assumed rationality under lying economic theories would make them of limited use in understanding voluntary organizational activity.);

c) Are human rights always collective? Critics of human rights in Western societies suggest that freedom of the press is for "those who own one," Intellectuals, business groups, and others in search of rights barter for them with elites in their own countries, or attain them in other countries through emigration. Thus for the Soviet citizen, Western-style "human rights" may be private goods which command an extremely high price.

d) Most human rights activists and many moral philosophers, however, would accept the proposition that violations of human rights affect not only those directly involved, but also injure the rest of society. Human rights provision is not exclusive either; where a Polish laborer fights for the right to collective action, she provides a good for other workers, and for the rest of society as well. The tack which the author finds most convincing suggests that the Soviet dissenter and the American human rights activist pose significant challenges to economic theorists. Large numbers of people contribute voluntarily (economic theorists would contend in most cases irrationally) to provision of the collective good of human rights.

Economic theorists' discussions of the free-rider problem and suboptimality of supply do have some applicatility to human rights INGOs. Olson suggests that individuals have negligible impact on provision of collective goods. A calculating individual, realizing that Amnesty International's human rights efforts would not be significantly effected by her participation, would fail to contribute. Where an individual fails to contribute (taking a free ride at the expense of those who do), the supply of the good in question is suboptimal. Thus:

P8: Organizations which seek to provide collective goods will be subject to free-riders; thus these goods will be suboptimally provided.

However,

P9: Voluntary Organizations which provide collective goods can induce contributions through promotion of selective incentives.

To demonstrate the propensity of humans to take free rides Olson uses example--the provision of law and order:

> Almost any government is economically beneficial to its citizens, in that the law and order it provides is a prerequisite of all civilized economic activity. But despite the force of patriotism, the appeal of the national ideology, the bond of a common culture, and the indispensability of the system of law and order, no major state in modern history has been able to support itself through voluntary dues or contributions. (1971:13).

If people must be coerced in order to contribute to their own safety, there would appear to be little reason for the average American to contribute for the warm feeling of knowing that perhaps one fewer Pakistani is being subjected to torture.

Organizations wanting to encourage contributions from free-riders may coerce them (as governments do through taxes and unions through strong-arm tactics), or may offer private goods as selective incentives. (Thus the American Automobile Association, which lobbies for the collective "good" of more highways, offers such private goods as tour books, film processing offers, VISA credit cards, and insurance to its members.)

Few human rights NGOs employ coercion, with the possible exception of liberation movements which conscript members as a means to eventual promotion of a right to self-determination. Many NGOs do, however, provide selective incentives, such as regular publications (AI's Matchbox, the ILHR's Bulletin), conferences with prominent speakers, bumper-stickers, film-rentals, T-shirts, and membership cards. Free-riders can be excluded from enjoying these incentives. (Selective incentives might not be materially worth all of the costs of membership;

they may nevertheless be important material incentives, while at the same time helping the group offer solidary incentives.)

Under Olson's theory, NGOs would also seek a free ride with INGOs and the rich (making the largest contributions) would be exploited by the poor. International League affiliates would contribute as little as possible to maintain their affiliation; independent human rights groups would have little incentive to "sign up" and ally themselves with Amnesty International. It may be that NGOs would (and many do) seek the best of both worlds: the benefits of INGO membership without incurring the costs (time and money) of INGO support. Where there is wide INGO participation, this is the case. All affiliates receive some selective benefits from the INGO, if only the right to label themselves INGO affiliates, while the burden of support rests inordinately on major Western European and American supporters. (An interpretation denying the existence of "exploitation of the rich by the poor" in human rights INGOs will be introduced later.)

It is easy to see why the economic theorists contend that the supply of collective goods is suboptimal. Only a minority in Pol Pot's Kampuchea would advance the collective good of human rights, because the cost of support was hight, while the odds of receiving benefit due to one's human rights activity were miniscule. In the United States, the $350/year cost of maintaining an Amnesty adoption group, plus the many costs for meeting-places, publicity, and expertise exceed the amount which can benefit from participation.

Even the less demanding forms of AI involvement, such as letter-writing through the Urgent Action Network, require investment of time and postage with little prospect of immediate gratification. Without selective incentives such as Amnesty's newsletter, which tend to boost spirits, members might share the doubts of nonmembers about whether the letters really do any good.

Nonmaterial incentives explain why groups like Amnesty International exist, and why NGOs affiliate with INGOs. Some economic theorists have introduced consideration of utilitarian optimism--where an individual would contribute to provide improvement in either his own condition, or in someone else's condition (Taylor, 1976;Frohlich, 1974). This only scratches the surface of involvement in the human rights movement and other altruistic movements, however.

In practice, some organization members are likely to be attracted by purposive incentives, consistent with group theorists' claims. (There is hard data to support this claim. See Moe, 1980 for analysis of Farmers Union, Retail Federation, Hardware Association, Farm Bureau, and Printers; Moe's analysis suggests that both selective incentives and group purposes attracted members. One would suspect that purposive incentives would be even more powerful in human rights groups. Further, in experimental settings, "the effects of free-riding were much weaker than would be predicted by most economic theory" (Marwell and Ames, 1979:1335 ).

Solidary incentives, as suggested earlier, are important factors in all noncoercive organizations. An insightful analysis of the New Left suggests that movement members consciously decided to forego additional power in favor of maintaining a sense of community (Breines, 1980). One might want to dismiss the New Left, and perhaps human rights groups too as among what Olson considers "lost causes," [admittedly] counter to the theory offered in this study (though the insignificance of such groups is of course consistent with the theory)" (1971:161).

Let us return to the "exploitation of the rich by the poor" in the light of solidary incentives. INGOs are supported virtually entirely by members in wealthy countries. A middle or upper class individual, however, spends only a small fraction of his or her income on the activities. In return this

individual will likely have greater access to selective incentives, e.g. greater ability to attend human rights conferences, reports of INGO investigations. The individual often receives specific solidary incentives, e.g. positions of high status in the organization, and will be esteemed in the community. In contrast, the "poor" dissenter in a "poor" country may spend a high proportion of her time and income on INGO activity, and may lose esteem. "Exploitation of the rich by the poor" must therefore be qualified:

> P10: Voluntary organizations are characterized by "exploitation of the rich by the poor" in terms of participation; in terms of solidary incentives, however, the strong benefit disproportionately.

Poor nonparticipants get a free ride as do rich nonparticipants. Poor members of coalitions may contribute significantly even by being members of the coalition; rich members' contributions by contrast offer nonmaterial returns and are generally affordable. (A similar argument would suggest that weak members of NATO are not necessarily exploiting the United States. The U.S. gets "goods" from the exchange above and beyond the common defense. See Oppenheimer, 1979)

This said, does not justify total rejection of the economic theorists' contributions. Most successful INGOs offer packages of incentives so that altruists' material losses are minimized. Combinations of minimal material disincentive, with significant purposive and solidary incentives are likely to prove attractive.

Economic theorists suggest an important role for entrepreneurs who would put such packages together. Discussions of entrepreneurial activities indicate why groups not directly concerned with universal human rights, including veterans, labor groups, and teachers may take part in human rights INGO activity. Frohlich, Oppenheimer, and Young suggest propositions about entrepreneurial behavior which may have relevance to transnational human rights activity; including:

P11: Political entrepreneurs will diversify with respect to both the supply of collective goods and their sources of revenue as a function of the presence of organizational complementarities in their operations. (1971: 54-55).

P12: The more a political leader depends upon donations, the more wary he will be of collective goods that are durable or have high initial costs of supply (55-56).

P11 suggests that once certain capabilities have been acquired by an entrepreneur (e.g. coercion ), he will have incentives to provide other collective goods (e.g. law and order).

The examples used in the present discussion, and the variety of incentives which individuals are suggested to have are at variance with the analysis of Frohlich, et. al. It is nevertheless the case that lawyers' organizations, labor groups, and businesses, owing to shrewd leadership, have attempted human rights promotion. Their association with the human rights issue is made easy by the presence of some members who are purposively motivated, whether rationally or irrationally. They also possess meeting places, tools for publicity, and expertise: three of the biggest barriers to new human rights activity. It would follow that a human rights INGO which "shops" for affiliates might seek out established churches, women's groups, or ethnic organizations whose leaders want to expand the group's activities.

P12 illustrates the value of economic theorists' assumptions once one broadens such terms as "cost" to ensure applicability to human rights INGOs. It is true and significant that human rights groups dependent on donations are reluctant to take on new rights issues for which initail costs would be high. Examples are repression of gays (consideration of this issue might cost an INGO member's financial support, and endorsements), and the right to food (initial consideration of this issue would invite criticism of the role of agribusiness, international banks, and marketing strategies, so that the group would be labelled political rather than humanitarian). It is to the credit of Amnesty

International that as its sources of finance have become more secure, the group has expanded its concerns by protesting the death penalty for all (not just political) prisoners, and raised questions about the use of trade and aid to bolster repressive governments.

The relation of durability to human rights INGO activity can be anlyzed in two ways: a) While the collective good of human rights is by nature non-durable, INGOs are not wary of attempts to increase durability, such as the United Nations Human Rights Covenants. Because group leaders' incentives are purposive or general solidary, they would probably forego their positions of leadership should human rights ultimately be provided to all; b) In practice, even with United Nations Covenants, political imprisonment is almost sure to continue, and new human rights violations will evolve with new technology. Political entrepreneurs do have in human rights an issue which appeals to billions of people, and which affects those in every occupation, religion, and region. Individuals wanting leadership positions in church, labor, journalistic, or women's INGOs may therefore find human rights, when combined with the group's other purposes, to offer a means of bringing in contributions.

The two propositions discussed offer only a glimpse of the forty in Frohlich, Oppenheimer, and Young. Observers of human rights INGOs might consider the applicability of this and similar literature to specific entrepreneurs: Amnesty's Peter Benenson, the International League's Roger Baldwin, and others. Each American AI adoption group and each El Salvador Solidarity Committee has identifiable entrepreneurs. The analyses of such organizations which have been completed would run contrary to the attribution of an entrepreneurial profit-seeking in the arguments of Salisbury (1969) and others. Even Lissner's discussion of the "politics" behind and surrounding voluntary development agencies' altruism suggests that the motives of group leaders are pure, perhaps too much so (1977).

The economic theorists' focus does therefore have some applicability to transnational human rights activity. The absence of large numbers of entrepreneurs when faltering organizations need renovation, and among rights activists preceding the founding of AI reflects "unprofitable" conditions in a broad sense. So too the slow growth in founding of African, Asian, and Latin American chapters. The presence of entrepreneurs who do not make material profit suggests solidary and purposive incentives which are overwhelming.

5. Agenda and Conclusion. The preceding sections have raised important questions about theories of organization and transnational human rights activity. Many of these questions are beyond the scope of this paper. This investigation is preliminary and replete with assertion. It has outlined areas in which assertion may be supplemented with empirical investigation.

In concluding, I would like to outline three queries or tasks:

a) The relationship between group theory, political theories, and economic theories is an intriguing one that is relevant to the progress of social science. While Wilson labels Frohlich, Oppenheimer, and Young's study as "almost devoid of empirical content," (1973:212) and Olson responds to group theorists with the claim that "the customary view that groups of individuals with common interests tend to further their common interests appears to have little if any merit" (1971:2), once the dust is cleared away there appears to be a basis for creation of more comprehensive social theory. Indeed, the more recent economic theoretical works combine insights of a variety of theorists to explain what each of their predecessors did and something additional. The disparate approaches have yet, however, to be integrated into a coherent framework applicable to organizations in a variety of societies;

b) An exhaustive study applying the propositions such as those discussed here to a specific human rights INGO would be useful both to theorists and to

practitioners. It appears plausible that membership appeals to the media are less influential than networks of friends; it appears also that sympathy with a cause leads to membership more often when selective incentives are provided than when they are not. Attention to background characteristics, professed motives, and other group involvements of INGO members would also be relevant to psychological, sociological, and other scholars of organizational and movement activity;

c) A fundamental question for organizational theorists and practitioners is the applicability of rationality and utilitarianism. This is generally assumed, and thought to be equally valid cross nationally. There <u>are</u> many adherents of creeds which profess higher goals than utility, however. Russell Means has suggested that the rationality of European civilization may be as short-lived as the longevity which rationalists predicted for mysticism(1980. Many leading dissidents appear to share this view:

d) This agenda may suggest the futility of the entire analysis: It returns to perennial questions: What is knowledge and how does it develop? What brings human beings together in cooperative, political activity? And, finally, what are human beings: calculators or mystics? Fortunately, analyses of INGO human rights activity and theories of organization already have provided an abundance of insight into these questions, which will never be answered definitively. Through the cross-fertilization of such disparate fields as human rights and organization theory there is some prospect of still more satisfactory insights.

## APPENDIX

### Recapitulation of Propositions

P1: Formation of organizations is a consequence of social differentiation, new technology, and better communication.

P1 (corollary): Societies with greater social differentiation, newer technology, and better communication will have more interest groups, and larger interest groups, ceteris paribus.

P2: Proliferation of organizations occurs in distinct stages.

P3: Creation of organizations representing previously latent groups leads to social order and peaceful change.

P4: Organizational effectiveness is a function of the congruence of power applied by the organization and involvement of lower participants (Etzioni, 1961:14)

P5: In normative organizations, lower participants are more likely to be highly integrated in organization activities, and to accept elite control over organization activities. (Etzioni, 1961:112)

P6: Utilitarian compliance and material incentives have greater applicability to coalitions of organizations (INGOs) than to single, affiliated organizations (including NGOs)

P7: Provision of general solidary incentives is important to the success of any voluntary organization.

P8: Organizations which seek to provide collective goods will be subject to free-riders; thus these goods will be suboptimally provided.

P9: Voluntary organizations which provide collective goods can induce contributions through promotion of selective incentives

P10: Voluntary organizations are characterized by "exploitation of the rich by the poor" in terms of participation; in terms of solidary incentives, however, the strong benefit disproportionately.

P11: Political entrepreneurs will diversify with respect to both the supply of collective goods and their sources of revenue as a function of the presence of organizational complementarities in their operations (Frohlich, Oppenheimer, and Young, 1971: 54-55).

P12: The more a political leader depends upon donations, the more wary he will be of collective goods that are durable or have high initial costs of supply (Frohlich, Oppenheimer, and Young, 1971: 55-56).

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